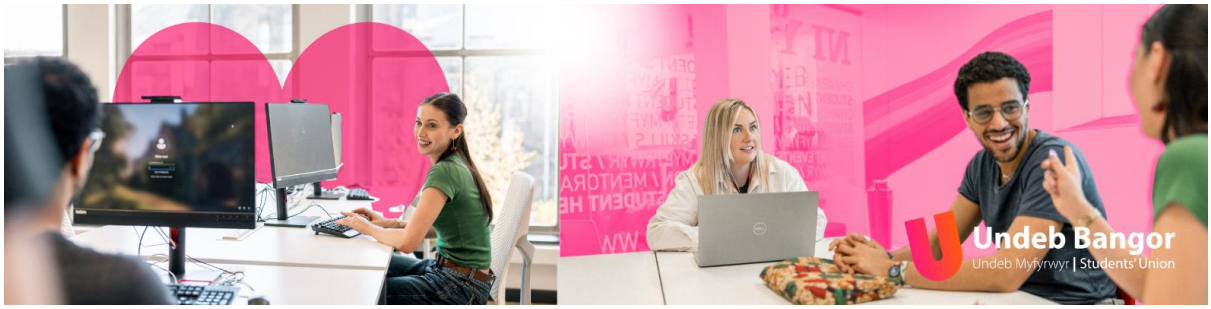


Fitness to Practise

If you're studying a professional course that includes a placement, such as Nursing, Midwifery, Physiotherapy, Teaching, Counselling or Social Work, you're expected to meet the professional standards of both your course and your profession. If concerns are raised about your conduct, behaviour or professionalism while on placement (or in some cases during your studies), you may be referred to the University's Suitability / Fitness to Practise Procedure.

Being referred to Fitness to Practise can feel overwhelming, but you don't have to go through the process alone. Our Advice Service is here to support and guide you every step of the way.

We'll begin by meeting with you to talk through the concerns or allegations that have been raised and give you the opportunity to explain your perspective. We'll help you understand the process, discuss how you can respond to the concerns, and prepare you for any meetings or panel hearings.

The Fitness to Practise procedure has several stages, which may include an early or informal resolution, a School or Programme-level investigation, a Stage 1 Panel, and, where necessary, a Stage 2 Panel. Not every case will progress through every stage, as this will depend on the nature of the concerns raised and your response.

We encourage you to contact us as soon as you're made aware of any Fitness to Practise concerns. Getting advice early means we can explain the process, answer any questions you have, and support you throughout each stage of the procedure.

Investigation at Programme / School Level

If concerns have been raised about your suitability for a programme, placement, or professional requirements, the first step will usually be an investigation at Programme / School level.

What happens at this stage?

Your School will arrange a meeting with you to discuss the concerns that have been raised. This may be referred to as a fact-finding meeting.

Before the meeting, you should be given information about the concerns or referral so that you have a reasonable understanding of what has been raised and can prepare your response.

During the meeting:

- The school will explain the concerns or allegations that have been raised.

- You will have an opportunity to respond to these concerns.
- You can explain what happened from your perspective.
- You can provide any relevant information or evidence.
- You may be asked questions to help the school understand the situation.

Possible outcomes

Following the meeting, the school may decide:

- No further action is needed – the school decides that the concerns do not require any further action.
- An action plan is agreed – you and the school agree actions to address the concerns. This may include support, monitoring, or other steps to help resolve the situation.
- The matter is referred to a Stage 1 Panel – if the concerns cannot be resolved at this stage, or are considered sufficiently serious, the matter may be referred to a Stage 1 Panel.

If your case is referred to a Stage 1 Panel, you should be informed of this and given information about the next stage of the process.

Stage 1 Panel

If your concerns cannot be resolved at Investigation at Programme / School level, your case may be referred to a Stage 1 Panel.

The panel will usually include the Programme, Professional or Statutory Lead and a representative from the relevant partnership. The Head of School or their nominee may also be involved.

A Chair will be appointed from the academic staff to lead the meeting, and a secretary will be present to keep a record of the meeting.

Any documents that will be considered by the panel should be shared with you before the meeting, so that you have an opportunity to review them and prepare your response.

What happens at a Stage 1 Panel?

The meeting will begin with introductions, so that everyone is clear about who is attending and their role in the panel.

The Chair will explain how the meeting will run and outline the different stages of the meeting. The Chair will also check that everyone has received, read and understood the relevant documentation and procedure before the panel begins.

The meeting will then normally follow this structure:

1. The case is presented

The person presenting the case will explain the concerns and the information or evidence that has been considered. This is normally the same staff member who conducted the investigation at the previous stage.

Panel members may ask the case presenter questions to clarify the information provided.

2. You respond to the concerns

You will then have an opportunity to respond to the allegations and explain your position.

We would normally recommend that you use this opportunity to summarise the key points from your written statement, rather than simply reading it word-for-word.

You will then be asked questions by members of the panel. These questions are intended to help the panel understand your circumstances, your response to the concerns, and any relevant information you have provided.

3. Questions between you and the case presenter

There may also be an opportunity for you and the case presenter to ask questions of each other.

What happens after the questions?

Once the panel has finished asking questions, you and your representative will normally be asked to leave the meeting while the panel considers the information and reaches its decision.

You will then be invited back into the meeting and informed of the outcome. If they are unable to provide you with the outcome on the day of the meeting, they will do so as soon as practically possible.

Possible outcomes

The Stage 1 Panel may decide:

- **No further action is needed** – the situation is considered not to require any further action at that point.
- **Actions are put in place** – the panel identifies actions to address the concerns and resolve the situation. This may include:
    - continuing your current placement;
    - arranging an alternative placement, where necessary; or
    - putting formal monitoring arrangements in place.
- **You are offered the opportunity to change programme** – you may be offered the opportunity to change to a programme that does not include a placement, if an appropriate programme is available.
- **The case is referred to Stage Two** – if the situation cannot be resolved, or the panel considers there are sufficient concerns about your suitability to continue, the matter may be referred to **Stage Two**. This will involve consideration by a **Suitability / Fitness to Practise Panel**.

- **The panel adjourns the case** – the panel may decide that further investigation is needed before a decision can be made. The meeting may then be adjourned to allow further information to be gathered or investigated. Where practicable, the adjournment should be for **no longer than 10 working days**.

Stage 2 Panel

If your case is referred to a Stage 2 Panel, the meeting will usually follow a similar format to a Stage 1 Panel. You will have the opportunity to respond to the concerns that have been raised and answer any questions from the panel before they make a decision.

The main difference is that a Stage 2 Panel includes a wider range of people, including independent and external members with relevant professional expertise.

Who will be on the panel?

The panel will normally include:

- A Chair, who will be either a Pro Vice-Chancellor or a Head of School from another College who is a member of Senate.
- An academic member of staff from the relevant School who has knowledge of the relevant professional standards or code of practice. This person will not have been involved in your case previously.
- One or two external members with expertise in the relevant professional standards. These members will not have had any previous involvement with you and will usually come from an external partner organisation. In exceptional circumstances, they may be from another university.
- The Students' Union President, a Sabbatical Officer, or a member of Students' Union staff nominated by the President.
- A Secretary, who will keep a record of the meeting.

As with Stage 1, any documents that will be considered by the panel should be shared with you before the meeting so that you have an opportunity to review them and prepare your response.

Possible outcomes

After considering all of the information available, the panel may decide:

- Unconditional continuation of your studies and/or placement – you can continue on your programme and placement without any additional requirements.
- Conditional continuation of your studies and/or placement – you can continue, but certain conditions will need to be met. These may include:
    - additional academic or professional requirements;
    - an alternative placement;
    - enhanced supervision or monitoring;
    - a recommended action plan;

    - additional training; or
    - pastoral, wellbeing, or welfare support.
- Suspension from your programme and/or placement – your studies or placement may be suspended until there are no longer concerns about your Suitability or Fitness to Practise. The panel may specify what evidence is required before you can return.
- Termination from your current programme and placement – you will no longer be able to continue on the programme for which you are registered. Where available, you may be offered:
    - a non-professional exit qualification; or
    - an alternative programme that does not include a professional practice or placement element.
- Termination from your current programme and restriction on future registration – you will no longer be able to continue on the programme for which you are registered, and the panel may recommend that you are not permitted to register on another programme at the University for a specified or unspecified period of time. If this recommendation is approved, it will be recorded on your student record and may be included in references or transcripts provided by the University.

Unlike at Stage 1, you will not normally be given the outcome on the day of the Stage 2 Panel.

The Panel's decision, including any conditions attached to the decision, will be confirmed to you in writing by the Panel Secretary.

The decision will also be shared with the Case Presenter and Head of School, normally within 10 working days of the Panel meeting, where practicable.

Appeals

You have the right to appeal the decision of a Panel. Your appeal must be submitted to appeals@bangor.ac.uk within 10 working days of the date you receive written notification of the Panel's decision.

Appeals can only be made on certain grounds. Please refer to the relevant procedure for information about the grounds on which you can appeal.

Preparing a statement

If you're invited to a Stage 1 or Stage 2 panel, we strongly recommend preparing a written statement. We'll review drafts, provide feedback, and help you make sure your statement addresses the issues raised.

A strong statement should include:

- A clear explanation of the concerns or allegations from your perspective, outlining what happened in your own words.

- Acknowledgement of your role in the situation where appropriate, showing responsibility, insight and an understanding of the seriousness of the concerns and their potential impact.
- Reflection on what you have learned from the experience. If personal circumstances contributed to the situation, explain these while still demonstrating accountability where appropriate.
- Details of any steps you have taken to address the concerns, such as completing additional training, engaging with University wellbeing services, seeking external support, or undertaking further professional development.
- Reference to the relevant professional code for your course, explaining which standards were affected and demonstrating your understanding of how you will uphold these standards in future. For example, this may include the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) Code, the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics, the Code of Professional Practice for Social Care, or other relevant professional guidance.
- A positive conclusion that reassures the panel you have reflected on the situation, learned from the experience, and understand how you will avoid similar issues in your future professional practice.

Your final statement must be sent to professionalissues@bangor.ac.uk (Stage 1) at least five working days before your scheduled panel.

If you are preparing a statement for Stage 2, this must be sent to regulations@bangor.ac.uk at least 10 working days before your scheduled panel.

To be sure to get the best out of the service, please ensure that you send your statements to academicadvice@undebbangor.com allow us enough time to review and provide feedback.

To help you get started, we've created an example statement that demonstrates the level of detail and reflection the panel is looking for.

Need help writing your statement? View a Statement example HERE.